

SENATE BILL 557

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By: **Senator Pinsky**

Introduced and read first time: February 4, 2010

Assigned to: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Education – Alternate Maryland School Assessment – Review and Revision**

3 FOR the purpose of requiring the State Department of Education to review and revise
4 the Alternate Maryland School Assessment (ALT–MSA) on or before a certain
5 date; requiring the Department to consider certain courses of action as part of a
6 certain review; requiring the Department to report to the Governor and to
7 certain legislative committees regarding a certain review; and generally relating
8 to the review and revision of the ALT–MSA.

9 Preamble

10 WHEREAS, The federal No Child Left Behind Act requires all students to be
11 assessed; and

12 WHEREAS, The assessment of students should be a tool used as part of
13 instruction; and

14 WHEREAS, Students with severe disabilities need functional and life skills
15 instruction as well as academic instruction and assessments; and

16 WHEREAS, Students with severe disabilities also receive an Individualized
17 Education Program (IEP); and

18 WHEREAS, Assessments should not be so time–consuming as to displace
19 ongoing instructional needs; and

20 WHEREAS, Special education teachers are spending an inordinate amount of
21 their instructional hours creating, preparing, and administering the many aspects of
22 the Alternate Maryland School Assessment (ALT–MSA), including selecting mastery
23 objectives for each student, developing the artifacts to accomplish the mastery

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 objective, and creating sample worksheets and data sheets to document these actions;
2 and

3 WHEREAS, The ALT–MSA lends itself to great subjectivity, given the nature of
4 the administration of the assessment and the flexibility provided for scoring the
5 assessment; and

6 WHEREAS, The scoring of the ALT–MSA lends itself to great subjectivity; now,
7 therefore,

8 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
9 MARYLAND, That:

10 (a) On or before July 1, 2011, the State Department of Education shall
11 review and revise the Alternate Maryland School Assessment (ALT–MSA) with the
12 goal of reducing the time required to administer the ALT–MSA.

13 (b) As part of the review required under subsection (a) of this section, the
14 Department shall consider:

15 (1) Providing greater guidance and taking primary responsibility for
16 the creation of the ALT–MSA while allowing modification to be effectuated by the
17 special education instructor;

18 (2) Reducing the number of mastery objectives that are currently
19 required for each student in each subject;

20 (3) Creating State–approved artifacts for each mastery objective,
21 including tasks, products, and actions; and

22 (4) For the most severely disabled students, incorporating a living
23 skills–based assessment into the existing academic–based assessment.

24 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That on or before October 1,
25 2011, the State Department of Education shall report to the Governor and, in
26 accordance with § 2–1246 of the State Government Article, the House Committee on
27 Ways and Means and the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
28 Committee regarding the review conducted under Section 1 of this Act.

29 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
30 July 1, 2010.